

Genesis 36

Scriptures pertaining to Esau have an immediate as well as a symbolic application. The Bible uses Esau as a figurehead for people who live by their abilities and who pursue their desires according to their own heart. They are called *men of the flesh* or *natural men*. We are all born this way. This is in contrast to transformed spiritual men, who live circumspect to God's will. In a sense, it is like going back to the lineage of Cain all over again. All of Cain's family was destroyed by the flood; because they became utterly violent and corrupted. God likewise, eventually wiped out all of the Edomites (descendants of Esau). They became hateful destroyers of Jews. They did everything in their power to wipe out God's people.

Read Genesis 36:1-14: Right off the bat, we see that Esau married a Canaanite. They were idolaters. This made their parents angry and depressed.

When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite.³⁵ And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah. (Genesis 26)

One of Esau's sons was named Eliphaz. The Book of Job quotes a man named Eliphaz the Temanite. Timan was 8-10 miles from Edom.

Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him. (Job 2:11)

Esau already lived in Edom when Jacob returned from 20 years living in Padan Aram with his wives, children and herds. This is written as a parenthetical insert, like Cain's bloodline is inserted into the second half of Genesis 4.

¹⁵ Then Esau said, "Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." ¹⁶ So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. ¹⁷ But Jacob journeyed

to Succoth, and built for himself a house and made booths for his livestock; therefore the place is named Succoth. (Genesis 33)

Read Genesis 36:15-43: Amalek was a descendant of Esau. He and his people tried to kill all of the Hebrews while they were in the desert during their exodus. Interestingly, the Esau curse seems to be alive and active in the life of Amalek. God states that his people will always fight Amalek (so to speak). The spiritual meaning is that our war with the flesh never ends.

Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. ⁹ And Moses said to Joshua, “Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” ¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses’ hands became ^[e]heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³ So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. ¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” ¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner; ¹⁶ for he said, “Because ^[g]the Lord has sworn: the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.” (Exodus 17)

Many years later the Edomites are still trying to destroy the Hebrews. They jumped in with both feet to help Babylon wipe out Jerusalem. They looted Jerusalem when they were under siege. They captured fleeing Jews, and sold them as slaves. They wanted Israel's property.

Edom Mistreated His Brother

¹⁰ “For violence against your brother Jacob, Shame shall cover you, And you shall be cut off forever. ¹¹ In the day that you stood on the other side— In the day that strangers carried captive his forces, When foreigners entered his gates And cast lots for Jerusalem— Even you were as one of them. ¹² “But you should not

have gazed on the day of your brother In the day of his captivity; Nor should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah In the day of their destruction; Nor should you have spoken proudly In the day of distress.¹³ You should not have entered the gate of My people In the day of their calamity. Indeed, you should not have gazed on their affliction In the day of their calamity, Nor laid hands on their substance In the day of their calamity.¹⁴ You should not have stood at the crossroads To cut off those among them who escaped; Nor should you have delivered up those among them who remained In the day of distress.

¹⁵ “For the day of the Lord upon all the nations is near; As you have done, it shall be done to you; Your ^{gl}reprisal shall return upon your own head. ¹⁶ For as you drank on My holy mountain, So shall all the nations drink continually; Yes, they shall drink, and swallow, And they shall be as though they had never been.

(Obadiah 1)

Remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom The day of Jerusalem, Who said, “Raze it, raze it, To its very foundation!” (Psalm 137:7)